

**Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form**

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. B-4403

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic 421 West Saratoga Street

and/or common The French Connection

**2. Location**

street & number 421 W. Saratoga Street ☐ not for publication

city, town Baltimore ☐ vicinity of congressional district Seventh

state Maryland county Baltimore

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Jerry Ely

street & number 425-427 W. Saratoga Street telephone no.: MD 21201

city, town Baltimore state and zip code

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse liber

street & number 100 N. Calvert Street, Room 610 folio

city, town Baltimore state MD

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Resource Count: 1

This circa 1850 brick building faces north on West Saratoga Street, abuts a partywall structure to the west and an empty lot to the east. The building is two bays wide and four stories high with shed roof. The brick stretcher bond is painted black and the trim is painted yellow. The street frontage is 17' and the depth is 56'.

The first story is divided into three bays. The first bay contains a slightly recessed entrance with a white tiled vestibule floor. The glass door is set into wood surrounds. The transom above has a transom bar embellished with a row of scalloped trim. The lintel has a fillet and bead profile. The second bay is filled with a large plate glass display window. The display case is backed with wood panelled partition with four sections of 6-light "windows" and transoms. The third bay contains a solid panel door that serves the upper stories. A projecting cornice runs nearly the width of the facade. It consists of a fillet, ogee, two fillets, back band, recessed back band, quarter round and two beads. A sign board is suspended under this cornice, and it obscures the glass in the door and display window transoms. Fluted molding runs below the sign board.

The second story is also designed for commercial or manufacturing usage. A large window is centered on the facade. The glass is modern plate glass, divided by metal mutins. The lintel is 19th century. It has a profile of fillet, ogee, bead, fillet, quarter round, bead, back band, bead and fillet.

The third story has two 1/1 sash windows with splayed brick jack arches and stone sills.

A brick stringcourse separates the third and fourth stories. The fourth story windows are 1/1 sash, but are shorter than those of the third story. The lintels are two-brick soldier courses and the sills are stone. The louvered shutters do not have shutter dogs.

The cornice has a slight projection that is followed by a dentil course and trim embellished back band. Brackets terminate each end.

The cellar has two windows. The one in the east was originally a cellar entrance, but the sidewalk is now paved over.

The east wall is blank and parged.

The south, back wall is partially visible from a rear alley. The main building has a one-story back building extending from the east bay. The main building is three bays wide in back. The wall has been parged over, but the fenestration pattern is visible beneath it. The second story has an arched opening in the first (west) bay, a small window in the second, and a larger flat-topped

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Baltimore. MD  
Section 7 Description  
7.1

in the third bay. The third story has a flat-topped window in the first bay, a small window in the second, and a flat-topped window in the third. The fourth story has two arched windows in the second and third bays.

The back building is blank and parged on the east and south walls. The west wall has doors on the west side.

## 8. Significance

Survey No.

B-4403

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect unknown

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

and-one-half-

This two-bay, three-story building is a good example of speculative combination residential-commercial construction along Saratoga Street during the mid nineteenth century. The building's style and massing are representative of the late nineteenth-century rowhouses and partywall structures on the block. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth writes, "the gradual abandonment of the shop-house as the dominant form of commercial architecture was due to the ever-increasing demands for trade and professional services along with a corresponding increase in land values, all of which fostered the design of buildings used entirely for commercial purposes."<sup>1</sup> In this case, the commercial solution was to retain the basic shop-house form but create a commercial second-story reading. The tripartite window in the second story, complete with its millwork lintel, is an early Victorian experiment in the expression of commercial architecture. The large expanse of framed plate glass and row of transoms invoked the nineteenth-century street-level shopfront and could be used as display windows for the second-story merchant's wares. While the overall shell of the building retains its nineteenth-century shop-house form, the tripartite window shows an attempt to make a commercial statement from a residential building type. Before there was a clear definition of a commercial building type there was this early, experimental form. The presence of two entrances indicates that the building was constructed to hold more than one tenant, another sign of multiple tenants. The third story and fourth stories, however, could have still been used as dwelling quarters.

Early Victorian details are still visible. There are few alterations to the first story: the inset entrances, glass display windows, and transoms are part of the original configuration although parts have been replaced. The cornice is a restrained example of the Italianate style: a slight projection over a small dentil course with brackets at the ends. An ornamental cornice was a common way of decoratively capping the top of a building.

<sup>1</sup> Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street, pp. 24, 29.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-4403

Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street (Washington: Preservation Press, 1987).

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Baltimore East Quad

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane Shaw, Architectural Historian

organization CHAP, Room 1037 date December 21, 1991

street & number 417 E. Fayette Street telephone 301-396-4866

city or town Baltimore state MD

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DHCP/DHCD  
100 COMMUNITY PLACE  
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023  
301-514-7600

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421 West Saratoga Street  
Baltimore MD  
Section 8 Significance  
8.1

The height of the building is typical for the block: most of the units, however narrow in frontage, rose to four stories by the mid-century mark. Despite the narrow frontage the impulse was to build taller and maximize the value of the lot. This unit, along with its partywall neighbors to the west, show a transition from the Greek Revival to the Italianate in terms of the treatment of the top story. The stringcourse and low windows are evocative of the Greek Revival eyebrow window.



**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA**

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization:  
Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period:

Agricultural-Industrial Transition, 1815-1870

Historic Period Themes:  
Architecture  
Economics

Resource Type:  
Building

Historic Environment:  
Urban

Historic Function and Use:  
Residential-Commercial

Known Design Source:  
None

## REVISIONS

## BLOCK REVISED

LOTS 17, 34, 35, 37, &amp; PT OF LOTS 1/16, 26 &amp; 36 DIV' CONSID' PER DEED &amp; B.S. C.S.H. 83-445

LOTS 1/16 &amp; PT OF LOTS 13 THRU 26 BLK. L18 CONSID' PER APP &amp; 83-444 &amp; 445

Lot 33 Lot No Change - C.S.H. 83-556

Lots 1/16, 17, 36 DIV' CONSID' PER LETTER &amp; LOT 33/35 LOT No CHANGED C.S.H. 85-063

Lots 27, 28, 29, 30 CONSID' PER O.O. CH. SH. 91-096

576

W SARATOGA

ST.

ST.

N. PACA

N. EUTAW

W. LEXINGTON

ST.

W. LEXINGTON  
ST.1/17  
2.875 Acs

0.8018 Acs

0.1224 Acs  
0.0308 Acs = Fee Unit 11  
0.1932 Acs = Res.

36

593

596

NGTON  
T.

AREA LOT 1/17  
 7 83/84 - 0.802 Acs  
 36 - 0.031 Acs  
 34/35 - 0.080 Acs  
 1/16 83/84 - 0.691 Acs  
 2.184 Acs  
 2.875 Acs 9/84

618

- DENOTES LOT FROM BLK G18 FOR 82/83  
 △ DENOTES CLOSING OF STREETS & ALLEYS

## NOTICE

THIS IS A REAL PROPERTY PLAT AS PROVIDED  
 FOR UNDER ARTICLE 76(d) OF THE CITY CHARTER  
 IT IS COMPILED FROM TITLE AND OTHER  
 SOURCES AND IS NOT AN AUTHENTIC SURVEY.

CITY OF BALTIMORE  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

PROPERTY LOCATION DIVISION

WARD 4 SECTION 5

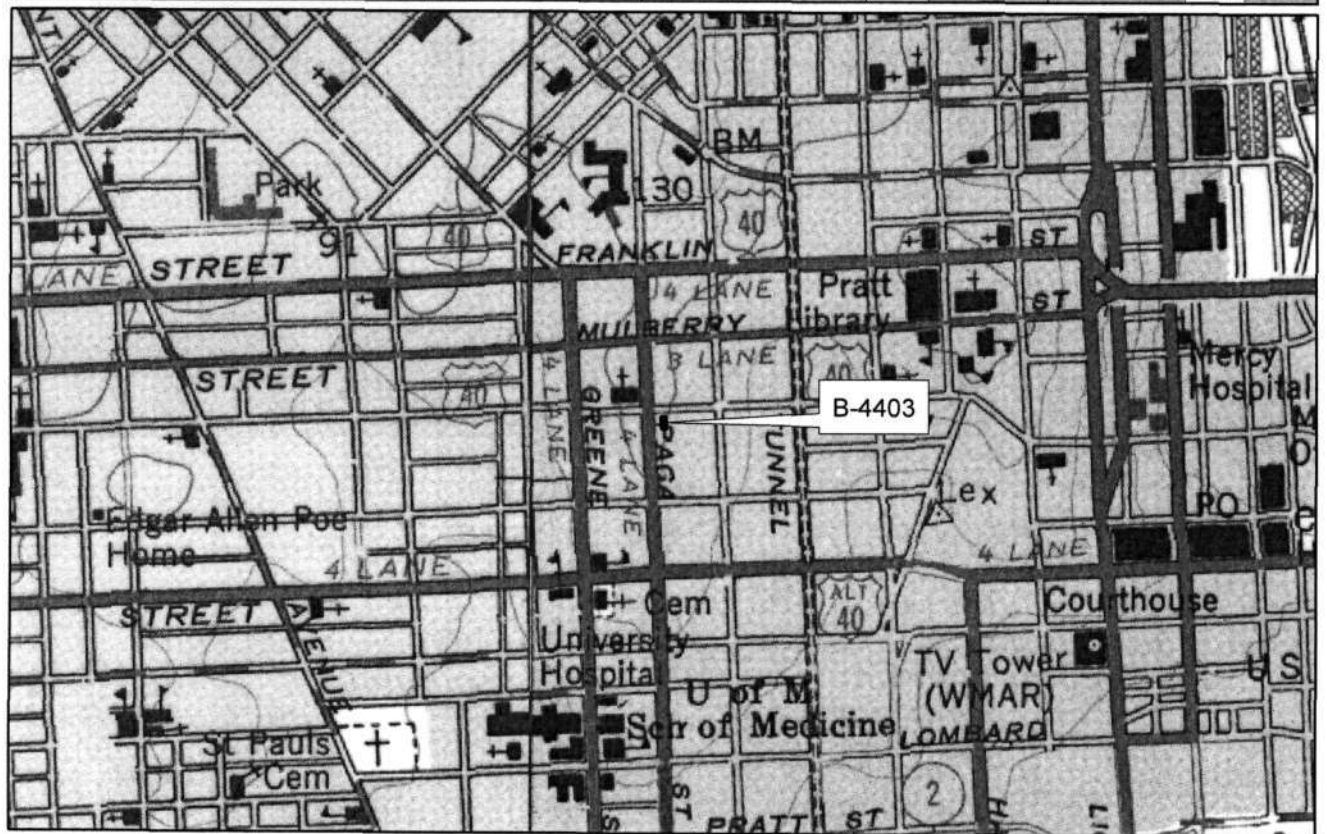
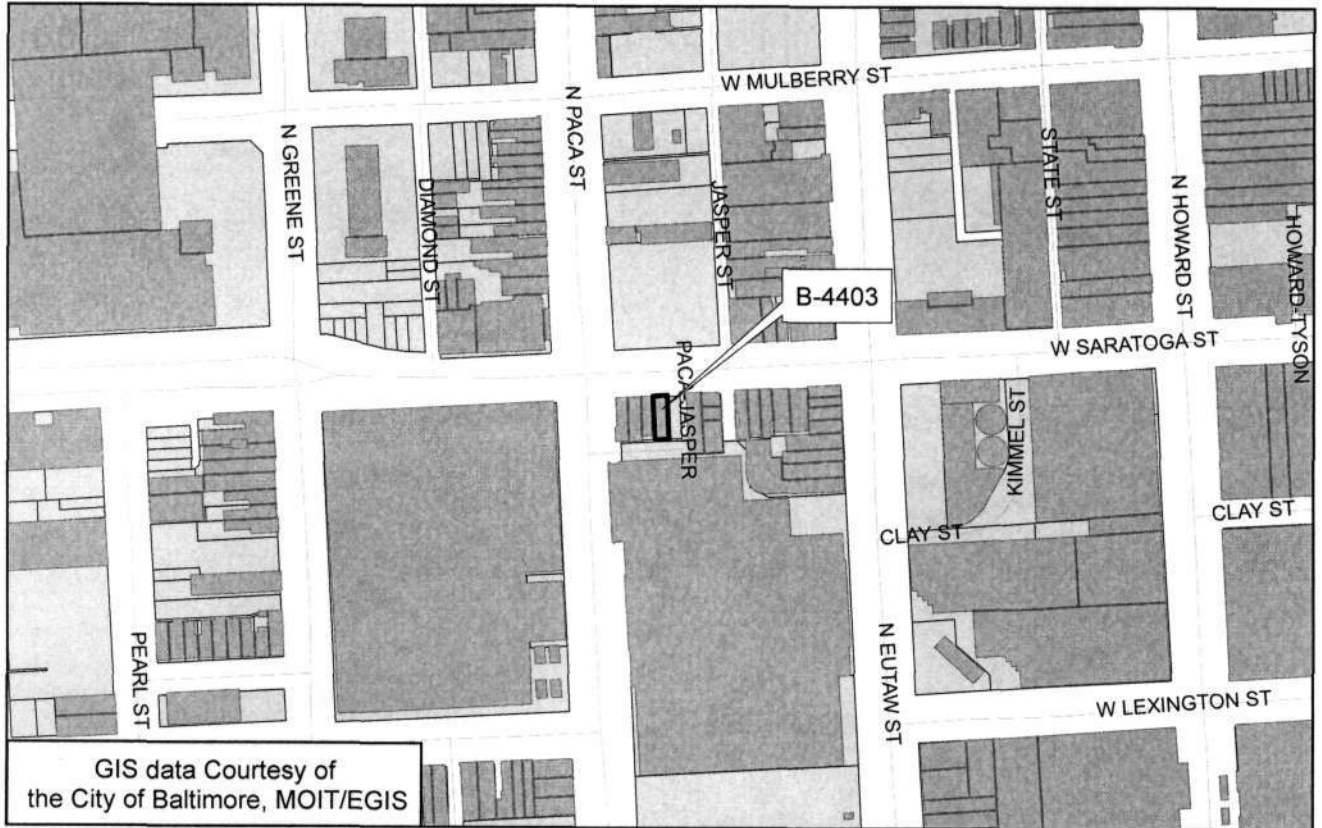
BLOCK 595

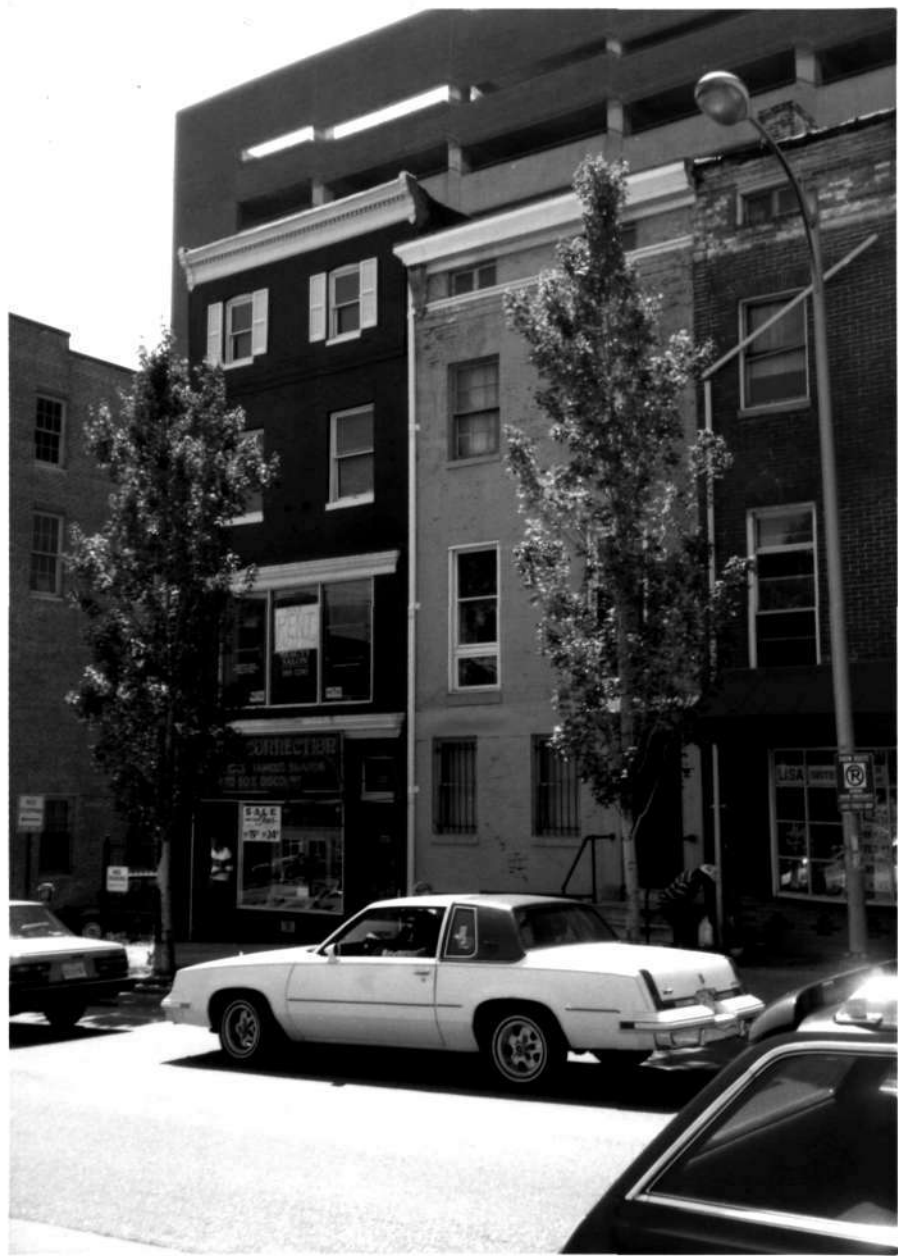
SCALE 1" = 50'-0" DATE MAY 1983

BY PMF  
 CD BY P.M. FORD  
 T BY



B-4403  
The French Connection  
421 W. Saratoga Street  
Block 0595 Lot 021  
Baltimore City  
Baltimore East Quad





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421 W. Saratoga St

Baltimore MD

Diane Shaw

8/91

Maryland SHPO

Facade, north elevation

V1